The Mirror of the Mind.

Logan.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE MIRROR OF A MIND

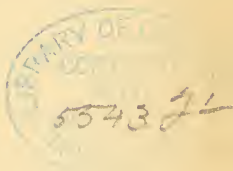
A

POEM

BY

ALGERNON SYDNEY LOGAN.

"Give me the glass and therein will I read."
King Richard II.



NEW YORK
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
1875

PS2249
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ALGERNON SYDNEY LOGAN,
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THE MIRROR OF A MIND.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

BRIGHT clouds which are the spirits of the skies !
Even now, as ever, while ye soar above,
On you the dying day has fixed his eyes
With a last look of sympathy and love,—
Fired by that gleam which through all time hath strove
To light the soul from out its darkened isle ;—

Ye are so pure, so heavenly, that ye move
Like angels answering back day's fading
smile,
Though cold corporeal Earth is bathed in
night the while.

II.

A melancholy splendor lights the peaks
Of the wind-wafted mountains, where they
rise,
A jagged chain which the horizon streaks;
Rearing a barrier which our sight defies;
Floating above the Infinite which lies
Beyond the land of tribute to the mind.
This glare of dissolution would disguise
Day's death with lurid lustre, yet we find

Each swift-receding ray grows less and less
defined.

III.

Dim misty nothings on the horizon's verge,
With weird significance rise one by one
From the abode of shades; and as they
merge
Like living letters range themselves upon
The arras of the world, where now is shown
The "Menè, Menè," of a monarch's might.
The last faint glimmer lingering all alone,
Slips like to water from the grasp of sight—
Lost like the foam in ocean;—Gray rolls on
the night!

IV.

With feeble glimmer, through the deepening
blue,
The greater stars come slowly one by one ;
The lesser follow, though at first but few,
Yet brightening as new numbers still are
shown ;
Feeding upon the darkness which has grown
Till all around is lost, save objects near ;
And these recede till—now I am alone
With the wide heavens, sparkling, flashing,
clear—
One world hath faded that a thousand may
appear !

V.

Ye stars, eternal children of the night !
Pale with a thousand vigils ! envious Time
Hath passed beneath you in his withering flight,
Nor dared the awful infinites to climb
From whence with undimmed eyes and mien sublime,
For ages ye have watched man bowing down
Beneath his load of misery and crime ;
Yet drinking with his eyes your radiance thrown,
To break his night of life, nor leave him Sorrow's own.

VI.

Guardians and friends of man ! whose unseen hands

Grasp the dim chains which check the mad career
Of this our world, which through the glittering bands
Of stars would rush to chaos, till the clear
Light of the sun would fade and disappear
Across the airy desert :—not so now ;
For Earth must carry each succeeding year,
Dense with its fruits, and while ye gaze below,
Move on with measured pace, nor ever swift nor slow.

VII.

Your very names are histories, and ye hold
The brightest deeds of the past world on high,

Which else were buried now all still and cold,
Within that grave which doth forever lie,
Waiting the present hour that passes by,
Following Time's steps and drinking in his waste ;
Ye have taught man to lisp Eternity.
Oh, wildly flashing stars! the light ye cast
Guides my mind backward, for ye are the endless Past !

VIII.

And men do call thee dead, thou mighty Past !
Thou father of our thoughts ! whence man derives

All that he knows—Let Time outstrip the
blast!
He takes from others, to thee only gives;
Thou art the giant charioteer, who drives
The magic car of the o'erpassing hour,
Born at thy mandate, and which only lives
To be thy food: Immortal changeless Power!
Thou art the light of life, brightest when
tempests lower.

IX.

From darkness into darkness glides the hour,
Inflicting change, yet changing 'neath the
view—
Apparelled from the mind—a magic power—
A ghost to me, a harlequin to you—

A medium whose capricious falseness through
Must come our light—a prism colorless,
Yet shedding on each side a different hue ;
Thus is the mind bewildered, nor can guess
Whether grief, joy, be shades, or that which
they profess.

X.

Joy is the very shadow of a smile,
Sorrow the mere reflection of a frown,—
Yet these themselves are shadows, and beguile
The heart to deem the world without its own.
He who would mine the silver that is thrown
Forever by the moon upon the sea,—
Floating upon a single spot alone,
Yet drifting by your side eternally—

He only from such dreams would forge
reality.

XI.

From hoary infancy to hoary age,
From trembling growth to tottering decay,
From the mere blank to the o'erwritten page,
From the green wood to ashes cold and
gray,
From things unknown to things long past
away,
How small the span, how fleeting is the fire,
How brief the gleam that falls upon our clay,
How short the hour in which the heart's
wild lyre
Will vibrate to the winds of change, love
hope, desire.

XII.

Why wander bone-strewed fields to meditate
On human mutability ? why rove
O'er sites of cities now depopulate,
To feel how all things toward Destruction move ?
Why muse on wormy, mould-filled skulls to prove
How beauty, hope, joy, life, speed fast away ?
An eye averted which did beam with love,
A single frown—a smile but yesterday—
More than all empires dead, speak change, decline, decay.

XIII.

Towards love's sun doth bliss, that butterfly,
Soar on his fragile wing, nor knows the day
Which viewed his birth shall see his bright plumes lie
Dim in the dust ; a single snow-flake may
Hurl him forever from his joyous way ;
A single breath from out the northern heaven
Will quench with stormy clouds the autumnal ray ;
And in an instant he is madly driven
Down on some chilly stream, with pinions wrenched and riven.

XIV.

When Exultation bursts upon the soul,
Crushing the barriers reared by years and pride ;
When the lip curls—eye flashes ; when Control
Reels backward tott'ring, and the long denied
And boastful tongue pours forth what we would hide ;
When to thy fellow-man thy heart grows warm,
Grasp thy mind's tiller, trust not to the tide !
Moments of perfect bliss e'er bode us harm—
The gentle sea gull's coming tells the wildest storm.

XV.

The boisterous sound and sweep of my own lyre
Have caught me up and carried me away,
Borne on the breath of an unquenched desire
To slake the thirst for thought, and to allay
Our aspirations for a purer ray
Than that which we inherit : but my song
Bids me return to whence my thoughts did stray—
Years which came singly, but now form one throng—
That atom of the Past which doth to me belong.

XVI.

I gaze into the camera of years,
And there behold a scene of sleepless pain—
Hopes ever walking hand in hand with fears,
Ambition scourging the reluctant brain,
Trying to strengthen it with stripes in vain,
Cursing the boy because not yet the man,
And blighting his best efforts with disdain ;
These tortured not by chance, but with a plan,
And dimmed the deep-set spark which they would over-fan.

XVII.

But these came later, and still torture now ;
My backward glances pass them, wandering

To meet one distant spot where lives a glow;
As when around our pathway shadows cling,
Far as the eye can reach the sunbeams fling
Their lustre o'er some valley green and smooth.
Sweet hour that drinks and tastes not of the spring!
Pure hour that hears and doubts not of the truth!
Fair hour of shapeless bliss, blest time of earliest youth!

XVIII.

Joy is the whetstone of the scythe of Time—
How early must our childhood wake to pain!
How soon must we be taught that thought is crime!

And strive with helpless hands, too oft in vain,
To file in secret the oppressive chain,
Which other minds upon our reason throw ;
Seeking to prove with eager, nerveless brain,
That what is said need not, for all, be so—
Oh, this agony ! behold the dawn of woe !

XIX.

But childhood waned, and as I older grew,
My glance was upward, though I knew not why ;
Above me Happiness the martlet flew ;
I marked her pathway through the stormy sky,
Enraptured with her pinions' gorgeous dye ;

And oft she faded from my straining sight,
Oft in her wavering course swept swiftly nigh—
I knew not she was footless, and her flight
Eternal, and I deemed she might, she could alight!

XX.

Power, Envy, Hatred, sent their shadowy brood—
Words, gestures, looks, the half indifferent air,
Oppression unavowed yet understood,
Assent equivocal, and praise most rare,
The hint that all men all your talents share,
The boundless praise of others your own knoll;

Like phantom birds with brazen beaks, these
tear
The stoutest heart, and check the boldest
soul,
And with their poisoned wings blot out the
distant goal.

XXI.

The marbles of the mind around me lie,
Opinions, both my own and others, piled
Confusedly in heaps ; from these I try
A stately and consistent dome to build—
A palace of the brain ; but feverish, wild,
To work with me my heart I cannot tame,
To fruitless toil it will not be beguiled :—

Thought eats away the mind which has no aim—
A hidden agony, a pain without a name.

XXII.

'Tis night; a youth is from his window leaning;
The moon and stars together slowly rise;
The scene upon his face prints not its meaning,—
The passing clouds, the moonlit, starry skies
He sees not, though reflected in his eyes;
His ear receives, not hears the vesper chant:
For he has found this truth which few can prize—

That all substantial things for which men
pant,
Objects of sense, are air—our thoughts are
adamant.

XXIII.

From my own past I gladly turn away;
Our life begins long after birth, and ends
Too often ere we die, and I delay
To seize each coming Present as it tends
To form what I shall be, and ever bends
The bow, and fits the arrow which belong
Unto the morrow. Round me there extends
A world of beauty which demands my song—
Tints, shadows, colors, rays, commingling in
one throng.

XXIV.

For now sad Autumn with his plaintive flute
Upon the hill-tops mournful ditties plays ;
Tears doth he shed which stain his russet suit,
Weeping the waste which yet he never stays,—
Save when at times his march he still delays
And toward the parted summer turns him round,
With melancholy smile and longing gaze ;
With red and yellow leaves his head is crowned,
And ever as he walks some rustle to the ground.

XXV.

The time exalts the spirit while it grieves—
Birth and decay in beauty ever vie—
The sunless sunlight of the yellow leaves
Lives everywhere, and mocks the cloudy sky;
Shedding o'er all the world a golden dye—
The light of Desolation ; far and near,
As setting suns defy mortality,
On wood, and glen, and hill-side doth appear
This smile amidst despair—bright sunset of the year.

XXVI.

The sunset of the year ! behold, the trees
Like evening clouds grow brighter as we gaze !

Lit by an orb we see not ; by degrees
Melting into a universal blaze ;
Filling the upward eye with wild amaze,
Which views these glories of the closing day—
A shattered and strewed rainbow lines the ways—
Till Autumn's later evening steals their ray,
Leaving them spiritless, unlighted, cold and gray.

XXVII.

Red trees like torches light the Autumn's bier,
Their leaves like sparks fall glowing to the ground ;

The golden gleam that earlier did appear
Hath passed away, and sad each sight and sound ;
Dead leaves in heaps lie stiffening all around ;
Mists rise where'er we gaze with motion slow ;
While the faint warble of the distant hound
Lingers upon the air with billowy flow,
Soft, sweet, yet ominous—unfeeling, though so low.

XXVIII.

And as the woodland paths we slowly tread,
A solitary leaf will often stray,
Like to a ghost, from out the piles of dead,
And roll before, as if to point the way

Which we must follow—even to decay ;
But glance above, and there behold the buds
Of the next year—these are the unborn May,
Which lives unnoticed in the weeping woods,
And smiles at Winter's might,—his whirlwinds, snows and floods !

XXIX.

All that through life we struggle to repress,
All that unites us to the vile and low,
All that would mock the soul and make it less,—
These are Death's spoils—he never aims a blow
At that which most we cherish; but the prow

Sees not the silvery wash that leaves the keel ;
The only immortality we know,
We by a kind of phantom memory feel—
Gaze back on days unborn, and past the future steal.

XXX.

There is a faint perception in the mind,
An unsubstantial goad which bids us climb ;
Sometimes it seems a wish almost defined,
Again a memory blurred by passing Time,
Anon a half-read prophecy sublime ;
And now it lights our living Hope of fame,
Now seems the dim remembrance of a crime,

Which strikes us ere we know from whence
it came,
And wakes a heavy throb, half sorrow and
half shame.

XXXI.

Dim as the orb that joins the hornèd moon,
Or meteors' trains which vanish in the sky ;
Faint as the chimes of distant bells which
swoon
Upon the ear, or when they wearily
Toil up against the blast, though flung from
nigh,
And scarce may reach us, breathless, feeble,
slow ;
As ineffective as the sunset's dye

Tinting the chilly foam, or frost on snow,
Or rain upon the ocean, sinking in its flow ;

XXXII.

Dim as the phantoms of our future years,
That pass before sad childhood's dreamy eye,
This spirit of the mind, as it appears
Troubling the waters—but why multiply
My images to paint the wind, or try
By ghosts to show a something dimmer still—
So thin that Time, Death, pass it scatheless by—
A might which makes the eye to flash and fill—
The unessential shade, whom Sorrow cannot kill.

XXXIII.

All feel in youth this restlessness within,
This pain which doth our life and aims impeach ;
We strive to fight the world in armour thin—
Grasp at a fruit beyond our mortal reach,
Miss it, and say it is not ; and then teach
That life is vain, and naught on earth is warm,
Concealing wounds that know nor balm nor leech ;
But yet in some this spirit takes a form,
And makes them stem the stream, and battle with the storm.

XXXIV.

Life's waves oft whelm our Hope, but ebbing soon,
Behold, it gleams again in flickering lines!
Like the blurred image of the ocean moon
In the wet sands, which tremulously shines,
And with a buried lustre: The heart pines
To flee from those who live chained to the car
Of trifles; but Ambition's blast inclines
To waste at length the soul it bears afar—
The soul, that rising spark, that fain would be a star.

XXXV.

The vastest forms which rise within the soul,
The mightiest children of the laboring mind,
Can never reach Expression's earthly goal;
But wander restless, shadowy, undefined,
Even beneath our gaze to melt inclined:
Like Earth's gigantic, lonely shade are they!
Which even on the moon no rest may find,
But from her breast is rudely torn away,
Left buoyless in space, the Impalpable's dim prey.

XXXVI.

To follow these on leaden wings; to hem
Our world-worn mantle with a cloth of gold;

To graft the ruddy rose upon a stem
Now withering as it stands; or to unfold
The fallen leaf, and from its shape, though cold,
Its fading color and its venous frame,
Recall that beauty sinking fast to mould;
To spur the mind which grows each day more tame—
Behold the noblest life, the loftiest human aim!

XXXVII.

Vain as the Tyrian cloak which the pale cloud
Wraps round his wasting form at even—vain
As castles in the fiery coals, whose proud

Towers dissolve into an ashy rain—
Vain as the memory of a smile when pain
Tortures the writhing lip, this constant war
'Twixt soul and sense, this torture of the brain,
This effort to outstrip the thing we are,
Embodied in a sigh when gazing on a star.

XXXVIII.

Yet pity him who hath no war within—
'Tis vain to call our sleep philosophy!
The elemental jar, the noiseless din,
This is the true, the only alchemy;
Which from the base alloys that men may see
Spread far and near fuses the virgin gold:

Yet oft the strain will shatter suddenly
The crucible which would this fusion hold ;
And thus the o'er-labored mind breaks long
ere it be old.

XXXIX.

I fain would be my soul, which I am not—
Which no man is—and yet which all should
be ;
But still 'tis comfort in our mortal lot,
To set our soul before us, and to see
Its beauties shine in wild sublimity ;
Till admiration deepens into love,
And love becomes absorption, and we flee
Far from the trifling crowd, to dwell
above,

Though still our living shade 'mongst soulless men may move.

XL.

And if my spirit to this impulse yields ;
'Tis humbly, not elated, nor confused ;
For I gazed long upon the snowy fields
Which I must tread, before my feet were loosed
From out their native valley ; and I mused
On icy winds, or e'er I sought to climb :
The penalty of pain is not refused—
He who would leave the sunny vale of time,
Takes for warm human joys the coldly fair Sublime.

XLI.

I write that they who follow me may say,
Not, "this he *wrote*," but "this indeed he *was*,"
"This is the life his soul lived day by day."
Men's best thoughts come unmarshalled, without class;
And I but ope the door for mine to pass
From my own mind into the open air.
To my own being I but hold a glass,
Which shows each changing look, or dark, or fair—
This Mirror paints the new, yet holds the old still there.

XLII.

Noteless I sing—What life was ever planned?
What thought e'er sent a herald far before?
Who would hold water in an iron band?
In one straight line do streamlets ever pour
From their slight spring down to the ocean's shore?
Why from a thousand flowers round me massed
In wildest beauty choose but three or four?
Or from the marble features of the Past
Hand to posterity a rigid death-like cast?

XLIII.

Scenes with their thoughts, thoughts with their vanished scenes—

All that within me has been most concealed
From blight and mildew—all that living
means—
What to my real self has most appealed,—
These I would garner here into one yield,
The humble harvest of my human clay;
But Time before us mows in our own field,
And what Time cuts, Oblivion stacks away,
Reaping what men have sown and tended
night and day.

XLIV.

My heart is throbbing with a great design—
To catch the spirit of a journeying mind,
And that my own; that where I hope or pine,
Struggle, enjoy, or fondly gaze behind,

Another, following, too, may pause and find
Fresh food for feeling: here I seek to show
Sculptures of thoughts and feelings ne'er
defined;
Such hopes, like moonlight sparkles upon snow,
Flash with a light from heaven, yet still
remain below.

XLV.

Yet shall the spirit cease to seek for fame,
When flame shall point to earth instead of
heaven.
Joys shall bedeck a life without an aim
When on the restless clouds by whirlwinds
driven,
Eternal flowers bloom: yet there are given

No words to paint that which the soul still strives
To seize and render palpable; but even
He who in his own being deeply dives,
Oft finds no beauty there—yet still believes it lives.

XLVI.

Pure Presence! that dost have thy daily haunt
Within the glitt'ring fleecy Alpine snow;
Whose radiant smile comes floating down aslant
From out the Autumn sunset's hazy glow;
Thou spirit of ideal beauty! slow
To penetrate the heart—why hast thou made

No fixed abode in mortal bosom, though
Thy form is ever seen by rock and glade?
Thou art the ghost of Joy, that flittest but
to fade.

XLVII.

The night walks forth, and through the
mists of heaven
Swings her dim lantern which we call the
moon;
While racing clouds around the link are
driven,
Through the white masses swift she makes
it scoon;
But holds it motionless to gaze, as soon
As the dank vapors pass: the air is chill,

The cricket chirps, then sinks into a swoon—
Perchance his last; the cedars dark and still,
Untiring sentinels! seem outposts on the hill.

XLVIII.

The white frost gleams around, the phantom snow,
Which lives but as the breath when blown on glass—
Cold child of morning, dying in the glow
Of the high sun! for often as ye pass,
Ye see him cowering low where the crisp'd grass—
Is shadowed by some object—all is gone

That marked him for a king—his realm
which was
The world, is shrunk into this spot alone—
Until the sun creeps round,—and the pale
sprite is flown.

XLIX.

The thin-armed and long-fingered naked trees,
Like weird anatomies start on the sight;
They come, we know not whence, by twos
and threes,
And seem the magic of a single night.
Why do they strip 'gainst Winter's icy might,
The cloaks they wore when June was all too
warm?
They do but doff their mantles for the fight!

Like ships they furl their sails before the storm,
Which whistles madly by, but cannot do them harm.

L.

The dreamy days of silence and of haze,
Making death dear to the enraptured mind,
Have passed away, and now where'er we gaze
The distances are rigid and defined;
Wind-spouts, like water-spouts, become entwined
With the thick dust, and bear it to the sky;
November doth the maniac winds unbind,
Who with transparent fingers twirl on high

The bare, bleak, rugged limbs,—so white, so
cold, so dry.

LI.

Times are there when the senses fail and
sink,
And when Thought's walls around contract-
ing seem
Till our world narrows to a cell; we
shrink
Into our altered selves; we know we dream,
And strive to wake, yet cannot; not one
gleam
Of light our present, past, and future hold;
All life seems vain, our toil we folly deem,
Forgetting we *have* felt, and are not old—

Then rise within the mind these longings manifold:

LII.

Something to feel before the heart grows hard;
Something to think with which no doubting strives;
Something to sing ne'er sung by mortal bard;
Something to see which perfect fulness gives,
And wakes no longing which the spirit rives,—
As do the ocean, star, cloud, sunset, bird;
Something to love incarnate, which yet lives

All undefiled by touch, or thought, or word—
Mind cannot all suffice, still Nature *will* be heard.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

Within the drooping vine the wind doth
linger,
Straying across its mystic warp and woof;
The rain keeps tapping with his fairy finger,
In sad monotony upon the roof;
While the faint plash of a retreating hoof
Flings back upon the ear its wat'ry sound.
I gaze into the gloom from all aloof,
Save the all-potent nothings spread around—

Silence and night, mere voids, which yet
wake thoughts profound.

II.

Silence, who hath not felt thy thrilling
power,
When having spoken with a cheerful air
To one we deemed near by at twilight's
hour,
We found that thou alone wert waiting
there!
Or listening for dead feet upon the stair—
E'en though we know them buried, and the
wreath
Our hands have hung—'t is thine to wake
despair;

Life fears thee, for thy true home is beneath—
All know thee for the mate, companion, friend of Death.

III.

Night, thou art Death! inwoven with his might;
Darkness doth ever sit in dying eyes;
Lo! the dead planets are bereft of light—
Their bloodless corpses stiffen in the skies—
Rivers their veins, deeps seas their arteries,
Solid and still; there doth thy presence keep
Death incorruptible: thy gentlest guise
Folds us in tender arms, and soothes our sleep—

Then softly beckons Death upon our souls
to creep.

IV.

But to the waking, velvet-footed Night
Raises the veil which wraps all things by
day,
Save those which brush against us, and a
light
Streams o'er the Past,—and truth is in its
ray!
A moment gone is full as far away
As ages past—Time is a whole—years be
But suppositions framed for human clay;
Like lines of latitude upon the sea,
All helpless to divide the waters rolling free.

V.

We move between two mighty doors of glass,
Future before us, clearer Past behind ;
We pine, we long these narrow bounds to pass,
Which though transparent all our movements bind;
The view before most pains the gazing mind,
For that strange sadness which doth overspread
The world, we chiefly in the future find—
Sighs breathed forth o'er a Future which is dead,

Outweigh the fleeting tears which for the
Past are shed.

VI.

To know the flood is still itself the ebb;
To see in the scarce budding rose decay;
To feel that yarn is lacking for the web
Of our ideal life; to view the ray
Fade from *one* face while unborn shadows
gray
There fall; to meet an unembodied woe;
To see our soul o'er-mired in our clay—
Such is the Future! felt by us e'en now,
As the pale victim feels the yet ungiven
blow.

VII.

The waters of the shadowy fount of Time
Flow silently and softly glide away;
A sphynx's head it is which none may
climb,
Darkness within which never felt a ray;
We only see the tingeless current play,
Nor e'er may know how much remaineth
there.
Whole civilizations of man's monstrous day
Are but the hours; whose clock upon the
air
Flings forth its clangless strokes, which all to
count despair.

VIII.

Its motion is so slow, and our slight time
Of watching is so short, we cannot see
The fated hand the enormous dial climb
And point the hour; and thus men differently
Compute the point man stands on—none agree;
Some see him young, some bowed with sinking age;
And while they fight the hand moves constantly;
Each calls as witness History's yellow page,
Which cheats philosophy, and mocks the groping sage.

IX.

The hour is late, yet ere I take my rest
Let us look forth upon the earth and sky;
The cold rain ceases—flowers it once had blessed—
It wets their bier, yet mocked their agony;
Great furling clouds on unseen masts go by;
A rainbow which the wayward moon hath wrought,
Like to a spirit's smile gleams forth on high—
Ghost of a ghost, translucent aëronaut,
Beauty more beautiful, an unimprisoned thought!

X.

Deep the clear azure of the midnight sky,
Dark even to blackness, fathomless and blind
As seas that never heard the leadsman's cry;
The full meridian moon the trees behind,
Ringless and rayless, white, cold, hard, defined,
Blanches the meadows glistening bleak and bare,
Like fields of snow; a thin ethereal wind
Hastens the moon-lit clouds, so ghostly fair—
White, glittering, pinnacled, the icebergs of the air!

XI.

There is a spot where oft my steps are bent,
Where giant rocks to press the earth are seen
With the deep, heavy, lost abandonment
Of an eternal slumber; and they lean,
And seem as nodding o'er the flickering sheen
Of a slight rill, which hastens on below
'Twixt mossy stones; while many an evergreen
Stretches his muffled arms with movements slow,
As if to stay the stream, and hush its boisterous flow.

XII.

Stern hemlocks up the dark and craggy steep
Stand balanced on the rocks, and feeding seem
Upon the solid stone; while slowly creep
Pale sunbeams through their tops, and softly dream
Far o'er the polished laurel leaves, and gleam
Like moonlight on the waters. Seasons pass,
And leave no foot-prints on the rocks and stream
In this self-centred vale; a mind it has

Which takes no colors from the world's
surrounding mass.

XIII.

When in her em'rald cloak fair Spring
appears,
Kindling a world to love with soft young
eyes,
All timidly this spot alone she nears—
The firs and laurels changing not their dyes,
Wave back a wintry answer; Autumn flies,
Shouting of changes—still are they unmoved;
The ice sprite wanders by the stream, and
tries
To bridge the waters, and, though vain 'tis
proved,

Plants piers along the banks fantastically
grooved.

XIV.

Here thoughts ideal, free, untinted, clear,
Live ever in the shade, and ere my feet
Have reached the glen, my steps they seem
to hear,
And from the green in shadowy guise to
greet
My coming to this wild and feared retreat;
For some do say a sprite of darksome mood
Doth haunt the spot, whom many dread to
meet,—
Yet spirit there is none within the wood,
Save the poor tortured shade, the ghost of
Solitude.

XV.

Eleven thousand years must slowly pass,
And a new star illumes the northern pole!
And shall not Nature then be as she was
Ere man began her glories to control?
Where then the toil-worn artificial whole,
Commerce and trade, stilts of man's petty pride?
Rivers 'twixt grassy banks may nobly roll,
Where smoky cities now their meadows hide,
And trout leap in the streams by factories deeply dyed.

XVI.

Primeval forests lurk beneath the plough,
To rise once more at Solitude's command,
Pushed back, not conquered, as when strong winds blow
With transient force the tides from off the land,—
Soon to return and sweep across the sand,
With greater violence the more delayed:
Silence and Loneliness are still at hand,
Though vain our search by stream, and hill, and glade;
We deem them ever found, when lo! 'tis but their shade.

XVII.

I would not sing man's downfall, for the sake
Of Feeling's glorious sun, whose disc immense,
Broke to a million fragments, still must make
In man's divided bosom dark and dense,
Its scattered home—collectless, unintense:
Yet shall these close extremes ne'er cease to be,
Things of pure intellect and things of sense,
Whose mien would make you deem they easily
Could wear Orion's belt, or toast you with the sea?

XVIII.

Beholding man, as man around we see,
We wonder Death will touch so mean a thing—
That they who never saw reality,
Who o'er pure Nature tawdry drapings fling,
Shall e'er behold the universal king,
The sole controller of life's hidden fire,—
From the cupped flowers, the dimples of the Spring,
To systems whom no weight of time can tire,
Who yet beneath his frown pale, sicken, faint, expire.

XIX.

Yet wonder not, for they are trodden down
Like eyeless worms, that see not the quick stamp
Which makes them earth again: Behold the town!
This populous waste, these airy nothings' lamp—
Here flit the worldlings who the spirit damp,
Their flesh bedizened but their soul in rags!
With voices unimpelled by mind they cramp
Too timid nature—these unsightly snags
Stick on life's boiling stream, and curse it that it lags!

XX.

Who gazes through a single skylight pane
Deems all heaven darkened by the smallest cloud;
So they that bend beneath the world's cold chain,
Crushed to the damp mould by their unseen load,
Know of no sun save the faint ray bestowed
Through their dim, distant loop hole—nay; arise!
Rend ye your bonds, the universe endowed
With flower-decked earth and star-emblazoned skies,
Were for one free-born soul too small a Paradise!

XXI.

Perspective rules the country of the mind,
Even as the outer world which meets the eye,
Far mountains there look low and undefined,
Though their gigantic summits pierce the sky ;
And heaps of sand, so that they be but nigh,
Poor handfuls at the mercy of all winds,
Blot out the landscape, and seem far more high ;
And thus mere nearness ever cheats and blinds
Him who doth gaze on life, and naught but trifles finds.

XXII.

Yet there are minds which like to Alpine lakes,
Reflect far-distant mountains; for though they
Must image back the green leaves of the brakes
Which line the margin; though a shadow stray
Across their mirror; though the light oar's spray,
Or darting fish, or swallow's wing, or stone
Thrown by an idler their smooth surface fray,

Still far below those awful snows are shown,
Which though they pass the clouds, the lake
beholds alone.

XXIII.

As many weathers as a tombstone feels,
Missing no change, day, evening, night, or
dawn,
So many impulses the mind conceals;
The youngest motive hath the greatest
brawn;
One influence a thousand more will spawn,
And all pull different ways, till hearts grow
cold;
Their strength still lasting till our own is
gone:—

How can the world so many feelings hold?
Who can resist them best? The timid, not
the bold.

XXIV.

The timid! they who dread their human
clay—
Who when the world's vast allied armies
come,
To burn their fertile fields, their souls to
slay,
Retreat, present no front, and save their
home;
All others trust to a redoubt of foam:
The timid! they who guard their inward eye,
Lest it by accident a moment roam

From where 'tis fixed upon their star on high—
These slowly, humbly plod the pathway to the sky.

XXV.

The genie of the lamp which burns within
Will never leave unanswered him who calls;
But first bar out the world's unmeaning din,
And in the starry and gem-lighted halls
Of thy own mind,—in silence which appalls,
Yet wakes thy better being,—there alone,—
While from thy eye a tear of rapture falls,
And thy loose locks by midnight winds are blown,

Rub thou thy talisman, and call its spirits
down.

XXVI.

And when the genie comes, as come he will,
Ask for far sight most distant Truth to see,
Sitting upon her adamantine hill,
Cloud-wrapped, unworshipped, voiceless; wearily
Swaying a realmless sceptre, though she be
True queen of earth, source of all beauty there:—
Ask for a heart that will not ever flee
From feelings' touch, and slowly melt in air;
Such first would cheat mankind, at last bring dull despair.

XXVII.

The lowliest flower still drinks the evening dew;
Upon the smallest twig the wind will play;
The faintest star-beam falls as far and true
As the sun's glories in the glare of day;
The lightest seed that on the blast can stray,
Within its tiny breast a might doth wield,—
A future lies entranced within its clay;
The dullest eye hath light, though ne'er revealed—
The humblest heart a chord, how deep so e'er concealed.

XXVIII.

But like a flute washed on a desert shore—
A harp Æolian buried 'neath the mould—
A giftless shrine with a cemented door—
The coin of an age now still and cold,
Which none can value—or a story told
To woods and streams, which lives upon the air,—
But scattered, melted, lost—an echo rolled
Far in the mountain, and still resting there—
Like each, like all the heart, it answers not to prayer!

XXIX.

For other hearts like mountains round us rise,
Seemingly fitted to return all sound—
We shout, but wake no echoes; or we prize
One being, deeming we at length have found
A mirror of ourselves,—our wish is crowned!
We smile into the glass, and start to find,
When we have smiled our image darkly frowned:
How hard at last the struggle to unwind
Dead hopes, which like dead vines, Life's tree so closely bind.

XXX.

Men seek to draw from man, e'en though they know
Themselves insolvent, helpless to return;
Seeds of the heart in others we would sow,
Hoping for harvest, while the whirlwinds spurn
Those cast on our own bosoms; still we turn
On things which are not, yet should be our whole,
Eyes dull, or which with other lustre burn:
There is a shining vapor in the soul,
Which could it be condensed, no more to heaven would roll.

XXXI.

Dark ocean's tides that chisel her bleak cliffs
To sculptured forms of wild sublimity,
Are ruffled, yet unaltered by the skiffs,
Which play upon their bosom; thus the high
Surges which mould our nature still pass by
The lovely forms upon their surface rife,
Which to our deeper being e'er are nigh.
There are no anchors in the barks of life,
Or each fond breast would be a bay to end our strife.

XXXII.

Winter, the aged huntsman, now appears,
One who with time hath strengthened, not declined;
His withered cheek the tint of vigor wears;
He seeks for spoil with hard and bitter mind;
With barking winds before him and behind,
Which beat each copse and thicket with keen breath—
They bite at all things in their fury blind,
And chase the clouds the chilly sky beneath—
All that is left exposed they doom to speedy death.

XXXIII.

Winds have found voices, but the streams are dumb,
Nor can they stir the snow-bird's thirst to slake;
The days have shrunk into themselves, all numb
And shivering in their sleep—the nights awake!
The long transparent winter nights, which make
The empire of the moon; and blazoning these
The winter stars upon our vision break—
Sirius, Procyon, Rigel, Betelguese,

Capella, Fomalhaut, flash through the glistening
trees.

XXXIV.

I loved in childhood, and still love to climb
Most dizzy rocks, and air-surrounded towers,
Where, as it were, beyond the reach of
Time,
We lose a moment the dull weight of hours;
Hills, streams, clouds, zephyrs reassert their
powers;
The soul bursts forth, as breaks the narrow
span
Of daily view, and distance dim devours;
Our angel smiles as we the horizon scan,

And feel the world contains more Nature
still than Man.

XXXV.

I love to sit and watch the setting sun
Slow sinking down athwart the western
wave,
Ere yet the purple twilight hath begun
To strew his violets o'er the dead day's
grave;
While at my feet the rocks the ripples lave,
Flinging their jets aloft in sparkling showers;
And glowing sails like stars the ocean pave;
And memories long forgot of youthful hours,
Make life's o'ertrodden path not wholly void
of flowers.

XXXVI.

But when the orb sinks nearer to the sea,
The sunlit sails do one by one expire,
Like stars at morn; and gazing drearily,
We feel that wildering heart-ache, that desire
To gain the ideal realm to which aspire
Our weary thoughts; now from the gathering gloom
Stalks Retrospect in sad and gray attire—
Life's early flowers are gone, and in their room
Behold long willow streamers waving o'er a tomb!

XXXVII.

Oh, Memory! oh, Memory! away!
With all thy thousand forms and colorings;
Pale evening star of our declining day!
Thine is the unseen hand that ever flings
A mantle o'er the coffined Past, and wrings
Dew from life's granite, and from seas of woe,
Sounding their depths, a few slight pearlets strings:
These are thy deeds, thy shapes,—but what art thou?
Art thou impalpable? I would thy essence know.

XXXVIII.

Ay, ether's self indeed! but stern of mood;
Thou art the spectre painter of the soul—
Thy darkest pictures in strong light are stood,
The fair in shadow; and to us the whole
Forms a sad gallery, for the eyes will roll
To fix on sketches which all beauties spoil;
And thus men strive these glances to control,
Lest following eyes see all and mock their toil,
Forgetting others' sight the shifting lights must foil.

XXXIX.

I've loved to gaze upon the Alps, where sweeping,
The winds their glittering grain forever sow;
A thousand winters past there still are sleeping
Upon each other's breasts in tiers of snow.
My heart warmed to those summits, like the glow
Which kissed their pale cold cheeks at close of day;
Something in things thus still which gaze below,
Strangers to motion which is but decay,

Speaks to what in ourselves would live
beyond our clay.

XL.

A moment wait, ye thoughts in eager
crowds!
The eternal rose which blooms but in the
sky,
Whose scattered petals are the ruddy clouds,
Sheds o'er the world a universal dye,
Surpassing speech; all earth is heaven, and
vie
Hills, streams, trees, grasses, snow, each
peeping stone,
With the immortal; Man's heart is his eye!

What winter's eve was e'er so fair?—'tis gone—
Save the faint feeble gleam which in this page is shown.

XLI.

Oh! that some cunning workman of the mind,
Could frame a magic, viewless door, which they
Who seek the paths of thought might close behind,
And bar return: like feudal vassals gay
Our better thoughts rush on; but one delay
Makes fewer helms and halberds round us gleam,

And the bright host doth softly melt away,
Till gazing round alone we inly deem
There were no fields to win,—'twas but a
troubling dream.

XLII.

The prattle of our children,—the hoarse hum
Of thousand voices pitched in tones of
trade,—
Men hurrying to and fro,—the cries that
come
From factions,—and book-whisperings that
persuade
Glory a myth, and all our thoughts degrade,
Till genius' self seems cold, and life grows
tame,—

That bustle which to live must still be made,—
Shut from our ears the enchanted flute of Fame,
Which though it be unheard, still warbles on the same.

XLIII.

Few find on earth the boon which they would seek,
Yet know they drink from a polluted spring;
A blush in secret burns the brazen cheek;
They feel that something to which poets sing,
Which fain would soar, but in them hath no wing,

To mount that ether which the bravest awes;
And years thus pass unheeded, and yet bring
New pains for which they dread to know the cause,
But wear a sculptured smile, and for spears brandish straws.

XLIV.

Within youth's grasp man's noblest aims are laid,
But middle age beholds them far, nor pines;
Till noon through seas of golden beams we wade,

Which climb the mountains as our sun declines;
Until this spirit-lustre only shines
Upon the ever varying clouds, which skim
Far, far above; reflected memory twines
Fantastic wreaths on our horizon's rim—
We gaze, and gaze, until all earth and heaven grow dim.

XLV.

Hues of the even, sombre yet serene!
Shades from the coming night thrown o'er the soul!
Shadows, which foil the hands that fain would glean

From our reaped fields but one more straw
of toll!
Dim forms, who can behold ye, and control
One cry for Time to check his mad career,
Prizing too late the oft neglected goal?
Who loves the coming as the parting year?
We curse our endless toil, yet pine when
rest is near.

XLVI.

Our hours are post-boys, who throughout the
day
Have loitered listlessly against our will;
But as they near their goal, and shadows
gray

Gather around, dash onward through the chill :
Or should I say that hopes and loves are still
The foaming steeds which drag our lagging wain
To the bright top of life's most stubborn hill ?
But there they are unharnessed all by Pain—
The car runs down alone, and ever speed doth gain.

XLVII.

Smiles, angels of the lip, are seen no more ;
The vestal of the eyes hath fled away.

Where are the souls that seemed to live
before
In every leaf, each cloud, each heavenly ray?
Leaves stir, clouds float, as brightly dawns the
day,
As fair on sleeping waters sleeps the star—
The children of the heart, oh! where are
they?
Where dreams at noonday dwell, a country
far,
Where sage and sober thoughts at wild weird
midnight are.

XLVIII.

Stillness condensed and gathered into form!
Behold it there! the pallid corpse-like snow—

Who can believe it came upon the storm,
Or e'er had motion, as it sleeps there now,
A spirit-marble covering all below ?
And yet the sprite upon the whirlwind climbs,
And while the crowded clouds in masses go,
Flings great white serpents o'er their ragged brims,
Which lie all motionless along the crooked limbs.

XLIX.

A winter's eve : there is no cloud to dim
The horizon's feeble pink, so coldly clear,—
A great blue goblet with a rosy rim,
Turned downward o'er the earth, the skies appear ;

Dead weeds and grasses, withered, brown
and sere,
Lift o'er the snow their seedless tufts and
limbs ;
No living sound invades the silence drear;
The wind with printless feet the snow-drift
skims,
Wrapped in his viewless cloak, singing his
pilgrim hymns.

L

The night is clear and moonless ; the stars
gleam
Peopling the void.—Oh, dwellers of the sky!
Lost in your own existence do ye seem,
For ye *are* rapture! and your forms on high

Shine with an inborn splendor ; silently
Looking a sacred language from afar,
Whose words are feelings ; vainly man would try
To grasp their fullest meaning—boundless are
Our senses and our thoughts,—beyond them glows the star !

LI.

There is a silence in the ocean's roar,
A hush within the moaning of the wind,
And in the crash of cataracts which pour
From mountain heights, a quiet to the mind—
A thunder with the stillness is combined

Which wraps the stars ! With day that nature
dies
Which makes man mortal ; starlight is en-
twined
With our soul's life—our awe-struck soul,
that tries
To drink serenity, whose fount is in the skies.

LII.

The snow is nested high in the forked limbs,
And there alights the dawn's first feeble ray;
The eastern line a second evening climbs;
White swan-like clouds that westward wing
their way,
In serried flocks towards the close of day,

Now eastward slowly move, and on their wings
Some golden glances glitter: Morning gray,
O'er stiffened meads, and bristling trees, and springs
All voiceless, hard and dry, his pallid lustre flings.

LIII.

But wintry objects check my outward eye;
The aggressive cold doth seem to drive within
All thoughts, as men shrink back instinctively
From those more self-wrapt than themselves, and in

Reserve their masters: but all those who win
No bays to-day, think straightway how before
They gained a crown—thus memories now begin
To rise.—Hark! for my mind hath heard a roar—
Once more, oh, ocean! do I stand upon thy shore.

LIV.

Like hair plucked by thy wild remorseless hands
From the dread things in thy dread custody,
The fibrous sea-weed strews the yielding sands;

Like great, white, frightened birds which
seek to fly,
And spread their snowy pinions toward the
sky,—
Then settle down again,—the phœnix foam
Flies up along the coast; whose girdle high
Around thy giant limbs doth circling come—
Own, 'tis a rope of sand which checks thy
will to roam!

LV.

Oh, Sea! the waves thy cymbals ever beat,
With ceaseless clang, monotonously slow,
Melodious measures which eternal feet
Alone could follow; while the billows flow,
The winds across them wander, and oft blow

Their fifes and trumpets; but as slowly sink
The evening shades, thy features sharper grow,
And wear a deadly look from which all shrink—
Wild voices seem to talk, laugh, whisper round thy brink.

LVI.

We go, return, depart, return again,
But Thought still sits beside the sounding shore,
Far from the haunts of hollow-minded men;
Infinity's wild voice is ocean's roar!
Hark to the billows' shout as on they pour!

Each hath a tongue that speaks in accents
clear
The secret of the world, the unwritten lore;
All that we know of life waves image
here,—
They ebb but to return, break but to
reappear.

LVII.

And thus new waves of life forever rolling,
Forever break upon death's ice-bound coast;
Each waving hare-bell its own knell is
tolling,
Yet not a leaf or petal e'er is lost:
The fairest flower felled by early frost,
The noblest soul cut down before its prime,

But fade away that a more lovely host
Forth from their ashes into life may climb,
The same with full-blown strength, in beauty more sublime.

LVIII.

The breath which filled my humble reed is spent—
The night is come in which no man may work—
The staff is broke on which my spirit leant—
The thoughts which in my inmost being lurk
Are speechless: From the all-surrounding murk
Two forms alone arise, Fate and Decay;

The last I know full well and would not
shirk,—
The other's face is sternly turned away,
To quench my mind with doubt, and quell
me with dismay.

LIX.

What I have felt shall others ever feel?
What I have sown with toil shall I e'er
reap?
Shall my voice ring afar with echoing peal,
Or shall I be as those who in their sleep
Deem they have cried aloud, while their lips
keep
Unbroken stillness? 'Twere in vain to try
To wring from out the inexorable deep

Aught that the yearning mind may satisfy—
Yet refuge still remains to fix the wandering eye.

LX.

The true tragedian for one only plays,
One eager face which he beholds below,
Upturned to his with an enraptured gaze,
Seizing his very thoughts ere words may flow,
And gaining on his utterance; even so,
If from earth's millions one ear drink my strain,
If in one heart I may awake a glow,
Or for one bosom win surcease of pain,

Let Darkness dye his frown! my toil is not
in vain.

LXI.

Perchance this lay I shall once more resume;
The future thoughts that now I cannot see,
Which stand arrayed between me and the
tomb,
May seek to live in music; tremblingly
I still would hope that I may yet, more free,
With higher heart, less soulless scenes
among,
Play as I journey onward—it may be—
I know not—But my thoughts have found a
tongue!

Though soon my soul grow old, still here
'tis ever young.

LXII.

But still I feel a shrinking and a doubt—
Long have I striven—ah! perhaps in vain;
My Hope sinks low, a breath might blow it
out;
More frequent grow despondency and pain;
My soul seems launched upon a shoreless
main:—
What rose unwatered still blooms on the
same?
What captive sinks not 'neath a life-long
chain?
What lamp unfed can yet preserve its flame?

What heart still float aloft without the breath
of Fame?

LXIII.

We live in gloomy days, 'neath sombre skies,
Which pour down ever sleet, and snow, and
hail;
And vapors dark and dank around us rise,
Breeding dull slugs and cold worms, that
assail
The flowers which strive with loveliness to
veil
The bare, black, lifeless mould of earth in
vain;
But should these loathely things of slime
prevail,

To blight the ambitious nurslings of my
brain,—
Still there are springs of joy which man can
never stain.

LXIV.

A spider's web with starlight dew besprinkled—
A wave which the uprising moon hath lit—
An autumn leaf ere time his cheek hath
wrinkled—
The unbought smiles of infancy that flit
Unquestioned by—a few bright pages writ
By slumbering hands—such straws to planks
may grow,
Clutched by the gasping mind, sustaining it

To stem the waters of disgust and woe,
Which rise with battling tides, to whelm us
in their flow.

LXV.

The sparkles of the ocean as they fall—
Translucent tongues that dwell within the
winds—
The voices of the locust hours that crawl,
With blast athwart the gardens of men's
minds—
The slow drag of the anchor that ill binds
Forever drifting Change—the strange impress
Of past on present, and the voice that finds
Its way from out the void,—their mysteries

Infuse into my soul, and bid her mock
distress.

LXVI.

I feel as I had reached the ocean's shore,
And found all silence there! the jostling
band
Of my own thoughts has hastened on before,
And left me here alone; my song doth stand
And beckon to its echo, which had planned
A swift and loud return; but now is blown
Into the Future's still-retreating land;
Where it may ever wander up and down,
Nor e'er return till I can catch no earthly
tone.

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